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THE ART AMATEUR

DEVOTED TO THE CULTIVATION OF
ART IN THE HOUSEHOLD

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

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HAVILAND SCULPTURED FAÏENCE.

HAVILAND FAÏENCE.



ONE can always turn to a new group of Haviland vases as one would to a choice collection of oil paintings. Each is the individual production of an artist of reputation. Unlike an ordinary piece of pottery, it is the true expression of his handiwork just as he left it before it was put into the kiln, without the intervention of the machine or the mechanic. "Barbotine," by which name the ware of this character is generally known, is the medium which the artist employs in painting on the baked clay which is done as readily as water-colors are used upon paper. This "slip" medium gives the vitrified pigments all the artistic properties of the colors used in a painting in oil, the result being a heavy impasto, covered with a thick coating of crystalline varnish. If the brush is not handled with freedom and skill the work will have a mean and wretchedly apprentice-like appearance. It is in this regard that we find the marked difference between those pieces of "Limoges" or "Barbotine" decoration produced at the Haviland potteries, and others executed by a similar process by some of the ceramic amateurs of Cincinnati

and elsewhere. In the artistic excellence of the work lies the whole value of the object. The daubed atrocities committed by some young ladies who think that they are rivalling the Haviland ware because they are using similar materials are greatly to be deplored. A bad water-color or a bad oil painting is painful enough, but happily it can easily be destroyed. Not so an offence in pottery, which can only be effaced by violence. And if this is so with the mere paintings on flat surfaces, how dreadful must be the crude modellings in imitation of the beautiful Haviland sculptured faïence such as is illustrated on this and other pages of this magazine this month. Every fruit piece by a Lindeneher and every figure by an Aubé is sure to be marked by the highest artistic qualities. But the Barbotine work by amateurs is often better than much of the ware that is imported under that name and offered for sale by dealers who would feel indignant if told that they kept in stock any but "artistic" pottery. The qualities in "Barbotine" which the purchaser should look for are skilful modelling, richness and evenness in glaze (undecked by the use of white lead), and harmony and restfulness in color.

In the more recent works on pottery the inventor of this ware is accorded a very high rank in the annals of ceramic manufacture. Miss Young in her book on this

subject says: "The Havilands of New York have made for Limoges—in conjunction with Auteuil, near Paris, where much of the moulding and decorating is executed—a place in the history of pottery as lofty as that which it occupies in the history of enamelling. Notwithstanding all that has been said of Saracenic and Italian decoration, we believe that it was reserved for Haviland to show the real decorative capacity of faïence, and to demonstrate the possible harmony between decoration and its excipient. For a long time Limoges was known solely as a seat of the porcelain industry. It was in this way that Americans first became familiar with its name. When the time came for Haviland to turn his attention to faïence, the change above referred to set in. He did more than merely institute a revival of an obscure industry. While Montagnon of Nevers was following closely in the track of his predecessors, and other manufacturers, both French and Italian, were busy with imitations of dead styles, Haviland set a gigantic task before himself, and it is to the credit of Americans that they have been among the readiest to appreciate his works and to encourage his efforts. His faïence is remarkable for its combining three very important qualities—novelty of process, originality of decoration, and strength of drawing and color perfectly in keeping with the material."

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